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Follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Report of the Secretary General

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly in its resolution 55/71 requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on the follow-up to and progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action[1] and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.[2] Similar mandates are contained in Assembly resolutions 53/120, 52/100, 51/69 and 50/203.

2. In each of the three reports submitted in the course of a year, on a rolling basis, information is provided that is most pertinent to the respective intergovernmental body in order to facilitate its decision-making process. The report to the Economic and Social Council aims at assisting it in its coordination function. The present report supplements information provided in the reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session in 2000 (A/55/293), and to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fifth session in 2001 (E/CN.6/2001/2), concerning developments related to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in intergovernmental forums reporting to the Economic and Social Council, in the regional commissions and in the Inter-Agency Meeting on Women and Gender Equality since the submission of the report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2000 (E/2000/77).

II. Results of the forty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the resumed session

3. The Commission on the Status of Women held its forty-fifth session from 6 to 16 March 2001. A resumed session was held from 9 to 11 May 2001. The agenda of the Commission included two thematic issues as well as other matters pertaining to its mandate, as discussed below.

A. Agreed conclusions on women, the girl child and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome

4. The Commission adopted agreed conclusions on women, the girl child and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS). In the agreed conclusions, the Commission noted that full enjoyment by women and girls of all human rights, civil, cultural, economic, political and social, including the right to development — which are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated — is of crucial importance in preventing further spread of HIV/AIDS. The Commission noted that the highest level of political commitment to the empowerment and advancement of women and to the prevention, research, care and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, especially HIV/AIDS, must be secured. Bearing in mind that women and girls were disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS, the Commission called for the further promotion of the advancement and empowerment of women and women's full enjoyment of all human rights, including the right to development and the control over matters related to their sexuality, in order to protect themselves from high risk and irresponsible behaviour leading to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS.

5. The Commission requested that Governments, relevant United Nations entities, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, individually and collectively, make combating HIV/AIDS a priority on the development agenda and implement multisectoral and decentralized effective preventive strategies and programmes. Governments, with the assistance of relevant United Nations entities, needed to adopt a long-term, timely, coherent and integrated AIDS prevention policy, with public information, life skills-based education programmes specifically tailored to the needs of women and girls, adapted to their social cultural context and sensitivities and the specific needs in their life cycle.

6. In order to ensure an enabling environment for regional and international cooperation, the Commission called upon the international community, the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to intensify their support of national efforts against HIV/AIDS, taking into

account the specific needs of women and girls. Action should be taken to eradicate poverty which is a major contributory factor for the spread of HIV infection.

7. In particular, the Commission urged relevant United Nations entities to incorporate a gender perspective into their follow-up and evaluation of the progress made on the control of sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. The Commission further noted that it is important to fully integrate a gender perspective in the preparatory process and in the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, including the full integration of a gender perspective in any new targets and in actions needed to achieve internationally agreed targets which relate to women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS.

B. Agreed conclusions on gender and all forms of discrimination, in particular racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

8. In its agreed conclusions on gender and all forms of discrimination, in particular racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, the Commission on the Status of Women recalled that the Platform for Action reaffirmed that all human rights — civil, cultural, economic, political and social, including the right to development — are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, and recognized that women face barriers to full equality and advancement because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability.

9. The Commission called on Governments, the United Nations and civil society to take an integrated, holistic approach to address multiple forms of discrimination against women and girls, in particular, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Actions would include examining the intersection of multiple forms of discrimination, including their root causes, from a gender perspective with special emphasis on gender-based racial discrimination.

10. Among policies, legal measures, mechanisms and machineries which should be taken by Governments and other actors, was the establishment and/or strengthening of legislation and regulations against all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including their gender-based manifestations. The Commission also called for the condemnation of all forms of racism and racial discrimination, and for concrete measures to promote equality based on the elimination of gender and racial prejudice in all fields, through improving access to education, health care, employment and other basic services, in order to promote full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights for all women and girls. The Commission also called for a change of attitudes and the elimination of stereotypes and prejudice through the development of gender-sensitive education and training programmes aimed at eliminating discriminatory attitudes towards women and girls, and through the adoption of measures to address the intersection between racist and gender-based stereotypes.

11. The Commission stressed the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective into the preparation, work and outcome of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and urged the inclusion of women in delegations to the Conference.

C. Other decisions of the Commission on the Status of Women

12. In addition to the agreed conclusions of the Commission on thematic issues (draft resolution IV), the Commission recommended three other draft resolutions for adoption by the Economic and Social Council: the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women (draft resolution I); discrimination against women and girls in Afghanistan (draft resolution II); and the multi-year programme of work of the Commission for 2002-2006 (draft resolution III). The Commission adopted three resolutions: the release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned in armed conflict (resolution 45/1); mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (resolution 45/2); and comments on the proposed system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 2002-2005 (resolution 45/3).

13. In draft resolution I, the Economic and Social Council would call upon the concerned parties, as well as the entire international community, to exert all the necessary efforts to ensure the continuity and success of the peace process in the Middle East and the achievement of tangible progress in the improvement

of the situation of Palestinian women and their families. In draft resolution II, the Economic and Social Council would condemn the continuing grave violations of the human rights of women and girls, including all forms of discrimination against them, in all areas of Afghanistan. By draft resolution III on the multi-year programme of work for the Commission for 2002-2006, the Economic and Social Council would adopt a multi-year work programme for the effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document[3] of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century". It would also decide that the work of the Commission on the Status of Women in relation to the programme of work should be closely related to its mandate and the relevant provisions of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document, with a view to ensuring their effective implementation through more practical and action-oriented initiatives and outcomes. Under this resolution, the two themes for discussion at the forty-sixth session of the Commission would be "Eradicating poverty, including through the empowerment of women throughout their life cycle in a globalizing world" and "Environmental management and mitigation of natural disasters: a gender perspective".

14. In resolution 45/1 on the release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned in armed conflicts, the Commission condemned violent acts against women and children in areas of armed conflict, strongly urged all parties to armed conflicts to respect fully the norms of international humanitarian law in armed conflict, and called for the immediate release of those taken hostage. The Commission urged all parties to armed conflicts to protect women and children and to provide them with unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance.

15. In resolution 45/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, the Commission recommended that the Economic and Social Council consider establishing a regular item on its agenda on mainstreaming a gender perspective in the United Nations system to monitor and evaluate achievements made and obstacles encountered by the United Nations system, and consider further measures to strengthen implementation and monitoring of gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system. The Commission also recommended that the Council consider devoting a future coordination segment, by 2005, to the review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system and to identify further strategies to accelerate their implementation, and as part of this review and appraisal, to request functional commissions to report on the progress made in implementing agreed conclusions 1997/2 in their work.

16. In its resolution 45/3, the Commission stressed that the System-wide Medium-term Plan for the Advancement of Women, 2002-2005 (E/CN.6/2001/4) should be an effective instrument for promoting the coordinated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. It also stressed the importance of gender mainstreaming, inter alia institutional follow-up and capacity-building. In the resolution the Commission emphasized the importance of a coherent and strategic approach to the actions planned to address the strategic objectives spelt out under each critical area of concern; as well as integrating a gender perspective into policies and programmes of entities of the United Nations system. It further recommended that the System-wide Medium-term Plan serve as a monitoring and coordination tool at all levels for system-wide progress in implementing actions under each critical area of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

17. The Commission took six decisions: decision 45/101 on follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions; decision 45/102 on enhancing the effectiveness of the working methods of the Commission on the Status of Women; decision 45/103 on the report of the Secretary-General assessing the implications of reforms of mechanisms in the human rights area (1503 procedure) for communications concerning the status of women; decision 45/104 on the resumed session of the Commission on the Status of Women; decision 45/105 on the proposed programme of work of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women for the biennium 2002-2003; and decision 45/106 on documents considered by the

Commission on the Status of Women under agenda item 3.

III. Results of other functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council

A. Commission for Social Development

18. The thirty-ninth session of the Commission for Social Development met from 13 to 23 February 2001. In his report on the priority theme of the Commission, "Enhancing social protection and reducing vulnerability in a globalizing world", the Secretary-General (E/CN.5/2001/2, para. 23) stressed the importance of the gender dimension in social protection, and noted that women in many societies experience discriminatory treatment under existing social protection regimes. He also noted that inferior access to health, education and training places women in a disadvantaged position in the labour market, where many women predominate in low-pay, low-status, part-time or contract work with limited opportunities of social security coverage. Additionally, unequal access to productive resources, such as land, capital, credit, technology and extension services, has had the effect of reducing incomes and savings, thereby restricting women's capacity for self-protection and increasing their dependence on their families.

19. Gender mainstreaming was also a key theme of the Commission's panel discussion on the priority theme. The panellists stressed that social protection systems should be both gender-sensitive and child-sensitive, and noted that because of competing claims on resources, oftentimes women and children were not prioritized in terms of budgetary allocation, particularly in the context of mandatory systems.

B. Commission on Population and Development

20. At its thirty-fourth session, held from 2 to 6 April 2001, the Commission on Population and Development held a general discussion on its special theme "population, environment and development" under the item entitled "Follow-up actions to the recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development". In its discussion, the Commission recognized that poor people, especially poor women and their families in rural areas, were more directly dependent on the environment for their survival. Women and girls, in particular, because of their traditional role in the preparation of food, were at high risk of exposure to particulates from the smoke emitted from the burning of coal and other sources of fuel. In reviewing the work programme of the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the Commission considered a number of studies that have gender components, for example studies on marriage patterns, abortion policies, and population ageing.

21. In its resolution 2001/1 on population, environment and development, the Commission requested the Population Division to continue its research on the linkages among population, consumption and production, the environment and natural resources, and human health, giving particular attention to levels, trends and differentials of mortality, fertility, distribution and mobility, and the role of population and development policies, as well as the mainstreaming of a gender perspective.

C. Commission on Narcotic Drugs

22. At its forty-fourth session, held in Vienna from 20 to 29 March 2001, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs considered the first biennial report of the Executive Director (E/CN.7/2001/2) on progress achieved by Governments in meeting the goals and targets for the years 2003 and 2008 set out in the political declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session. The report was based on the replies of Governments to the biennial questionnaire which incorporated a gender perspective.

D. Commission on Human Rights

23. The Commission on Human Rights held its fifty-seventh session from 19 March to 27 April 2001. As in previous sessions, the agenda included an item entitled "Integration of the human rights of women and the gender perspective", with "Violence against women" as a sub-item. The Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women addressed the Commission under this agenda item, while a message from the United Nations Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women was read out by the Secretariat. Gender issues

were also raised in the "Special debate on tolerance and respect".

24. The Commission adopted four resolutions addressing women's human rights, while gender issues were included in several resolutions on the work of thematic special rapporteurs and in resolutions applying to specific countries. In its decision 2001/107, the Commission endorsed the decision of the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on traditional practices affecting the health of women and the girl child for two more years and to request her to submit updated reports to the Subcommission at its fifty-third and fifty-fourth sessions. In its decision 2001/108, the Commission decided to request the Secretary-General to publish, in all official languages, the report and updated report of the Special Rapporteur on systematic rape, sexual slavery and slavery-like practices during armed conflicts and to transmit them to Governments, United Nations entities, including international tribunals and to the Assembly of States parties of the International Criminal Court.

1. Women's enjoyment of human rights

25. In its resolution 2001/34, on women's equal ownership of, access to and control over land and the equal rights to own property and to adequate housing, the Commission reaffirmed resolution 42/1 of 13 March 1998 of the Commission on the Status of Women, and urged Governments to comply fully with their international and regional obligations and commitments concerning land tenure and the equal rights of women to own property and to an adequate standard of living, including housing; recommended that Governments encourage financial lending institutions to ensure that their policies and practices did not discriminate against women, and that international, regional, national, and local housing, financial and other credit facilities promote the participation of women and take into account their views; and invited the Secretary-General to encourage all relevant United Nations organizations and bodies to undertake further initiatives to promote the equal rights of women in these matters.

26. In its resolution 2001/48, on traffic in women and girls, the Commission called on Governments to penalize traffickers and intermediaries, while ensuring protection and assistance to the victims with full respect for their human rights; encouraged Governments to conclude bilateral, subregional and international agreements to address the problem; urged Governments to consider signing and ratifying the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols, particularly the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; and invited Governments to encourage Internet service providers to adopt or strengthen self-regulatory measures to promote the responsible use of the Internet to eliminate trafficking in women and children, in particular girls.

27. In its resolution 2001/49, the Commission urged Governments to take various measures, including information campaigns and training for various sectors, to address violence against women in all its manifestations and settings. It reminded Governments that their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women must be implemented fully with regard to violence and must take into account General Recommendation No. 19 adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its eleventh session in 1991. It welcomed the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, and urged States parties to consider signing and ratifying the instrument.

28. In its resolution 2001/50, on integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system, the Commission invited the Economic and Social Council to give attention to the implementation of its agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective and 1998/2 on the coordinated follow-up and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and welcomed the resolution of the Commission on the Status of Women (45/2) which requested the Economic and Social Council to devote a future coordination segment, by 2005, to the review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of agreed conclusions 1997/2 and to identify further strategies to accelerate their implementation, and, as part of this review and appraisal, to invite the functional commissions to report on progress made to implement the agreed conclusions in their work. The Commission welcomed the cooperation between the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the report of the Secretary-General on the joint work plan

for the year 2001 (E/CN.4/2001/70-E/CN.6/2001/3) and encouraged the Secretary-General to make the plan available to the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women for 2002. The Commission stressed the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective into the preparations, work and outcome of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which would take place in Durban, South Africa, from 31 August to 7 September 2001, and urged the inclusion of women in delegations to the Conference.

2. Gender issues in the work of thematic rapporteurs, special representatives, and other human rights mechanisms

29. In several resolutions the Commission requested its special rapporteurs, including those on the right to food (2001/25); adequate housing (2001/ 28); education (2001/29); religious intolerance (2001/42); extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions (2001/45); the right to freedom of opinion and expression (2001/47); the human rights of migrants (2001/52); and torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (2001/62), to apply a gender perspective in their work. The Commission also requested the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to continue to apply a gender perspective in its work (2001/46), and welcomed the specific attention paid by the Representative of the Secretary-General to internally displaced women and children (2001/54). Similarly, the Commission invited the newly established Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people to take into account a gender perspective in carrying out his/her mandate, paying special attention to discrimination against indigenous women (2001/57).

3. Country-specific resolutions

30. The Commission identified the need to address violations of women's human rights in resolutions addressing specific countries, including Afghanistan (2001/13); Iraq (2001/14); Myanmar (2001/15); the Islamic Republic of Iran (2001/17); the Sudan (2001/18); the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2001/19); Sierra Leone (2001/20); Burundi (2001/21); Equatorial Guinea (2001/22) and Cambodia (2001/82). The immediate cessation of all abductions and attacks on civilian populations in northern Uganda by the Lord's Resistance Army, in particular women and children was called for in resolution 2001/74, and the ongoing violations and abuses of human rights and humanitarian law, in particular against minorities, women and children, as well as the forced displacement of civilians, was condemned by the Commission in its resolution on assistance to Somalia in the field of human rights (2001/81). In its resolution on the situation of human rights in parts of south-eastern Europe (2001/12), the Commission condemned all forms of trafficking in persons, including women and children, and called on all authorities in the region, in cooperation with international authorities, to protect the human rights of the victims and to take all steps necessary to prevent and eliminate trafficking.

4. Issue-specific resolutions

31. The violation of women's human rights and the need to take a gender perspective when dealing with particular topics was identified by the Commission in several issue-specific resolutions. Thus, the importance of systematically adopting a gender-based approach throughout the preparations for and in the outcome of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance was stressed in resolution 2001/5 on the subject; the role of women in the process of the realization of the right to development was affirmed, as was the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective means to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate sustainable development in resolution 2001/9, on the right to development. Resolution 2001/26, on human rights and unilateral coercive measures, drew attention to the negative effects of such measures on, inter alia, women and children, and resolution 2001/30, on the question of the realization in all countries of the economic, social and cultural rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, noted with interest the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and called on States to secure progressively, through national development policies and with international assistance, the full realization of the range of rights, giving particular attention to the individuals, most often women and children, especially girls, and communities living in extreme poverty. Similarly, the Commission reaffirmed

that special attention must be given to the plight of women and children, who often bear the greatest burden of extreme poverty in resolution 2001/31, on human rights and extreme poverty. The importance of States taking all necessary measures to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by the girl child of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, to take effective action in the context of violations of those rights and freedoms and to eliminate discrimination, including all forms of violence, and harmful traditional practices, as well as trafficking was stressed by the Commission in resolution 2001/75, on the rights of the child.

32. In its resolution 2001/33, on access to medication in the context of pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, the Commission called upon States to pursue policies, in accordance with international law, which would promote the accessibility to all without discrimination of such pharmaceuticals or medical technologies and their affordability for all, including socially disadvantaged groups; in its resolution 2001/51, on the protection of human rights in the context of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), the Commission invited States to take all necessary measures to eliminate stigmatization of and discrimination against those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, especially for women, children and vulnerable groups, and to establish coordinated, gender-sensitive, transparent and accountable national policies and programmes for HIV/AIDS.

33. States and the international community were urged to apply a gender perspective in the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious or linguistic backgrounds in resolution 2001/55 on that subject. The important role of national human rights institutions in the protection and promotion of the human rights of women was affirmed in resolution 2001/80, on national institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights, in which the Commission also welcomed the participation of national institutions in the five-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

34. The Commission identified human rights education as an important vehicle for the elimination of gender-based discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities through the promotion and protection of the human rights of women in its resolution 2001/61, on the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004); and the Commission encouraged Governments to consider gender-sensitive training of trainers in any national or regional plans of action for human rights education and public information in resolution 2001/63, on the development of public information activities in the field of human rights, including the World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights. The principle of equitable regional and gender-balanced representation in the composition of the staff of the United Nations was affirmed in Commission resolution 2001/65, on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order; and in resolution 2001/76, on equitable geographical distribution of the membership of human rights treaty bodies, the Commission recalled that it had already recognized the importance of giving consideration to gender balance with regard to the election of the members of human rights treaty bodies.

35. In its resolution on impunity (2001/70), the Commission urged States to give necessary attention to the question of impunity for violations of human rights and humanitarian law, including those perpetrated against women and children.

E. Commission on Sustainable Development

36. The Commission on Sustainable Development held its ninth session in New York from 16 to 27 April 2001. The Commission called upon Governments to strengthen the role of major groups, including women, through participation in decision-making. The Commission also encouraged Governments to take into consideration the health and safety concerns of women and children in rural energy programmes, and to promote efforts to address the disproportionate burdens experienced by women in rural areas in access to energy supply. Governments were encouraged to improve policies that reduce environmental health hazards, including through plans and strategies to prevent, mitigate and respond to diseases resulting from indoor and outdoor air pollution, giving special attention to the health of women and children.

37. On transport issues, the Commission pointed out that lack of access to transport significantly impacts women's health and limits their having access to markets and other income-generating activities. Transport should therefore be made available and accessible to women in order to facilitate social and

economic progress. The Commission also encouraged Governments to collect and provide access to relevant information for decision-making for sustainable development, including gender disaggregated data, incorporating indigenous and traditional knowledge into information bases for decision-making.

F. Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

38. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice held its tenth session in Vienna from 8 to 17 May 2001. It reviewed the Action Plan for the implementation of the 2000 Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice prepared by the Secretariat pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 55/59 and 55/60, which, in accordance with paragraphs 11 and 12 of the Vienna Declaration, refers to the need for criminal justice systems to take into account the special interests and needs of women who are victims or witnesses. The Commission also considered the interests and needs of women in contact with criminal justice systems in the context of other agenda items, notably the review of the United Nations Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings and the promotion of United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice (basic principles of justice for victims of crime and abuse of power and information on the elimination of violence against women).

G. Commission on Science and Technology for Development

39. The fifth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development was held from 28 May to 1 June 2001. Oversight of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action has been undertaken predominantly by the Gender Advisory Board, which was established in May 1995 as a subsidiary body of the Commission to monitor the implementation of the Commission's recommendations on gender, science and technology, to provide assistance to national Governments and the United Nations system in their implementation of the recommendations; and to advise the Commission on the gender, implications of its own work programme. Members of the Gender Advisory Board have participated in Commission Working Group and panel discussions and, when appropriate, have drawn attention to the gender dimension. Regional secretariats of the Gender Advisory Board were established in South-East Asia, Latin America and Africa. The Board collaborated with UNESCO in the production of a policy toolkit on Gender Indicators in Engineering, Science and Technology. A number of recommendations on gender, science and technology were submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women meeting in New York in March 1999 on behalf of the Board; members of the Gender Advisory Board were also involved in the gender, science and technology event at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in June 2000.

H. Statistical Commission

40. At its thirty-second session, held from 6 to 9 March 2001, the Statistical Commission considered a report of the Secretary-General on progress of a project on gender issues in the measurement of paid and unpaid work (E/CN.3/2001/4). The Statistics Division developed this project with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Development Research Centre/Canada (IDRC) to follow up on recommendations of the Platform for Action on developing data to provide a more comprehensive knowledge of all forms of work. The Commission welcomed the initiatives of the Statistics Division in the measurement of paid and unpaid work, in particular the development of the guide to producing statistics on time use and the web site on time-use surveys. The Commission noted the value of time-use statistics, not only for issues related to gender but also more broadly for quality-of-life concerns, social accounting, care of the elderly, estimates of the workforce and total work accounts. The Commission endorsed the outline for the guide, subject to suggestions made by the Commission, and raised a number of specific issues related to the design and methods of time-use surveys that the guide should address. Considerations related to the dissemination and use of time-use statistics, including in the valuation of unpaid work, were also raised. Many countries expressed interest in sharing the results of their work and continuing to collaborate with the Division in the development of the guide.

41. The multi-year programme of work of the Commission covering the period 2000-2003 contains

several topics related to gender issues, such as household income statistics, demographic and social statistics and development indictors in the context of the follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits.

IV. Activities of the regional commissions

A. Economic Commission for Africa

42. Within the framework of the preparations for the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) played an active role both in Africa and in New York in preparing Africa's active participation in the preparatory process and in the special session itself. A special mission was therefore undertaken to New York in February 2000 to collect and disseminate to member States critical information on the preparatory process. During the mission, African embassies in New York were briefed about the outcome of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women in November 1999 and the subsequent African Plan of Action that articulated Africa's priorities for the next five years. Additionally, two days prior to the special session, experts in the African delegations were briefed in a one-day information workshop about the objectives of the meeting, modalities for participation, the status of negotiations of the outcome document and consultation mechanisms during the sessions.

43. Gender mainstreaming efforts at ECA focused on development of competence in gender analysis, engendering the planning process and contents of the core activities of the Divisions and the ECA Conference of Ministers. To this end, ECA produced a framework for gender analysis and gender mainstreaming methodology, tools and guidelines designed for its intervention. The framework articulates micro-meso-macro-level analysis. Training workshops using this material were organized for selected staff from all Divisions and the Subregional Development Centres in September 2000. A Workshop with programme managers to sensitize them on the budgetary implications of gender mainstreaming resulted in an agreement that 20 per cent of their financial resources would be used in gender mainstreaming and that programme managers were ultimately responsible for ensuring integration of gender concerns into their work programmes. At the level of member States, several countries were assisted to develop national gender policies and frameworks for their implementation. Additionally, ECA produced a CD-ROM on the *Status of Women in Africa*, which was launched in New York during the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. It highlights the gaps in the availability of sex-disaggregated data and the need for a systematic strategy to take corrective measures. The CD has since been updated and converted into a publication under the *African Women Report* series for the year 2000.

B. Economic Commission for Europe

44. Since the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly held in January 2000, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) has further strengthened its gender activities. The project for a regional gender web site, launched at the ECE-UNDP Workshop on Gender Statistics for Policy Monitoring and Benchmarking (Orvietto, Italy, October 2000) strengthens national capacity to produce and disseminate gender data and reinforce gender mainstreaming at the policy level. It consists of two components: the development of a gender statistics web site linked with national web sites, and a set of activities, at the national and regional levels, to promote the conceptual development of gender statistics and encourage the use of gender statistics in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring.

45. ECE has recently established, within its Working Party on Industry and Enterprise Development, a new team of specialists on women's entrepreneurship. The main task of this team is to evaluate gender-specific barriers to enterprise development, especially in transition countries, and to prepare policy recommendations based on best practices. To raise the awareness of problems faced by women's entrepreneurship and to draw the attention of Governments and other stakeholders, ECE has created a virtual Gallery of Excellent Women Entrepreneurs with portraits of over 90 women from Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

46. Following the agreement reached during the Regional Coordination Meeting of the European Offices of the ACC members organized by ECE in

October 2000 in Geneva, ECE facilitates the work of the inter-agency focal group on gender and the economy. The role of this group is to exchange experiences, discuss policies and initiate joint undertakings in such areas as gender aspects of macroeconomics, trade, labour market and information and communication technologies (ICT). ECE is responsible for initiating the dialogue and establishing contacts among group members.

47. In addition, ECE has co-organized two regional events. The first was a seminar on women in forestry, organized jointly by the ECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission (Viseu, Portugal, 2 to 6 April 2001). It assessed the current situation in the forest and timber sector from a gender point of view and discussed a strategy for gender mainstreaming in this sector which is traditionally perceived as male-dominated. The second was a workshop on gender and the labour market, organized jointly with the World Bank and UNIFEM (Warsaw, Poland, 15 to 17 January 2001). The workshop critically evaluated the impact of international organizations, especially those of the World Bank, on engendering transition policies and gender-mainstreaming into the economy. It stressed the need to promote gender sensitive models of governance and better cooperation among donors, including through establishing inter-donor working groups and increasing co-financing of projects.

48. A new impetus to the process of gender mainstreaming was provided by the recommendations which resulted from the visit to ECE of a representative of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. These recommendations cover all areas of work as well as cross-sectoral issues. They were discussed by senior management, and priority actions to be taken within each division have been adopted. An accountability system to monitor the implementation of these initiatives is also being developed. Finally, ECE has also established a post of Regional Adviser on Gender and the Economy who is responsible for advising countries with transition economies on their policies to support the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the economic area.

C. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

49. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has given priority to the promotion of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and has increased its technical cooperation for capacity-building at the country level. The Commission also initiated the execution of an inter-agency project aimed at facilitating the use of gender indicators in public policy-making, with ECLAC being the coordinating agency among the five regional commissions. As part of the project, a gender-oriented web site was launched which gives access to a complete database on the situation of women at the national and regional levels and presents a complex network of links that connect users to other information available on gender issues in the region.

50. Two other inter-agency projects were also designed for execution in the year 2002: one aimed at capacity-building for governance in national women's offices in Latin America and the Caribbean and the other dealing with the impact of pension system reform on the gender gap in the region. In the framework of the two-year project on mainstreaming the gender perspective in ECLAC and sectoral ministries, initiated in 1999, various missions of technical cooperation were carried out with Argentina, Ecuador and El Salvador. The subregional headquarters for the Caribbean in Port of Spain held two ad hoc expert group meetings on "Gender and Macroeconomic Policies in the Caribbean" and the "Development of Social Statistical Databases and a Methodological Approach for a Social Vulnerability Index for Small Island Developing States". Additionally, collaboration agreements have been established between the ECLAC Women and Development Unit and other substantive Divisions that consider issues like gender and trade, natural disasters and Habitat.

D. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

51. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) convened an expert group meeting to strategize on regional implementation of the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. At the expert group meeting,

experts identified priority issues in the region, such as globalization and poverty reduction, gender-based violence and trafficking in women and girls, women in decision-making, women's human rights, ICT, HIV/AIDS, peace and conflict resolution, and women and the environment. In December 2000, ESCAP organized the Regional Conference on Asian Women for a Culture of Peace, in Hanoi, jointly with the National Commission of UNESCO in Viet Nam and the UNESCO Culture of Peace programme. The Conference, attended by over 100 participants, adopted the Hanoi Declaration and the Asian Women's Plan of Action for a Culture of Peace and Sustainable Development.

52. To assess the current situation of the use of the Internet among women's organizations and to explore possible methods of assistance for those countries which are less advanced in terms of access to ICTs, research on ICT use among women's organizations in Central Asia and the Pacific was undertaken. ESCAP is also undertaking an in-depth evaluation of the impact on women of the various social safety-net schemes implemented during the Asian financial crisis. In September 2000, ESCAP convened the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific at Kitakyushu, Japan. A review of the progress made and obstacles encountered in promoting the role of women in sustainable development was prepared for the Conference, enabling gender issues to be integrated into the deliberations of the Conference.

53. The implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the importance of the Convention's reporting process in establishing benchmarks to monitor progress in the status of women were highlighted in a workshop in the Pacific co-organized with the Division for the Advancement of Women, in close collaboration with the Government of New Zealand, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, UNDP and UNIFEM. The subregional training workshop on support to the preparation of State party reports to be submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was held from 13 to 15 February 2001 in New Zealand.

54. To support the incorporation of gender perspectives into the substantive work of ESCAP, the Commission has established an Inter-divisional Task Force on Mainstreaming Gender Equality into ESCAP's Training Activities. The initial task is to ensure that all training programmes offered by ESCAP include relevant gender equality perspectives as an integral part of the training. Also, to strengthen the Women in Development Section, a local-level post was redeployed to the Section to strengthen information technology and research support services of the Section.

E. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

55. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) continues to provide assistance to national machineries for women in capacity- and institution-building. Governments have become aware of the central importance of such machineries, and have also recognized the need to endow these machineries with adequate human and financial resources for effectiveness and efficiency of results. The Commission focused on coordination and collaboration within the United Nations system and with regional organizations. The mandate was given to ESCWA to work closely with regional organizations such as the League of Arab States and the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research for speeding up the process of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Gender budgeting is still at an embryonic stage in the Commission, and ESCWA is part of the second phase of a project initiated by the Inter-Agency Meeting on Women and Gender Equality (IAMWGE).

56. Several countries, including Palestine, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, have been taking concrete steps to formulate poverty alleviation strategies with a focus on poor women and their empowerment. The third session of the Committee of Social Development of ESCWA (Beirut, 27 to 28 March 2001) focused on dialogue between NGOs and Governments, and recommended the establishment of a special coordinating mechanism to liaise with NGOs and governmental bodies. The Committee also recommended the development of region-specific indicators to monitor developments and achievements, especially on the follow-up to global conferences. A standard outline was devised to assist States to meet reporting requirements on progress achieved in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcomes of other global conferences of the 1990s.

57. The Commission continued to provide support in institution-building and capacity-building of national machinery for women and NGOs concerned with women's issues and gender equality (i.e., in Lebanon, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). A gender-awareness media campaign of a national and regional scope is being executed with the production of 14 one-hour-long television episodes on each of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action, airing nationally and regionally. Television spots of 60 seconds' duration have been produced by the Commission and are being disseminated regionally. ESCWA is collaborating closely with the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research to produce a publication entitled *Globalization, Gender and Economic Participation of Arab Women*. ESCWA is also the project adviser for this publication, which will give in-depth region-specific information and analysis.

V. Inter-Agency Meeting on Women and Gender Equality of the Administrative Committee on Coordination

58. The sixth session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Women and Gender Equality of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) took place at United Nations Headquarters from 27 February to 2 March 2001.[4] The Meeting continues to implement its inter-sessional programme of work through a system of task forces focusing on priority areas identified at its annual sessions. The mandates for the task forces are endorsed by the Meeting as a whole and task forces report to the Meeting on an annual basis. The increased use of electronic communication has facilitated more active participation across the system inter-sessionally.

59. The Meeting endorsed the work on gender mainstreaming in programme budget processes undertaken by the task manager, the Office of the United Nations Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and decided to continue the project. In the light of the experience gained from the five case studies completed, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) was requested to prepare a good practice example of its case study in terms of its institutional impact, for wide distribution among members and interested constituencies, and for submission at the next session of the Meeting. Five more case studies will be completed by the last quarter of 2001, and an additional five in the second quarter of 2002. Following completion of these case studies, a synthesis report will be prepared, for submission to the ACC, outlining the objectives, process and outcomes of the work of the task force. Each phase of the project will result in clear recommendations and good practice examples.

60. The Meeting welcomed the progress report of the task manager, ECLAC, on the work on tools and indicators for gender impact analysis, monitoring and evaluation. The task force collaborates closely with the United Nations Statistics Division and other statistics offices, including those in the regional commissions, thereby strengthening links to mainstream producers of statistics, and to their work on coordinated and integrated follow-up to United Nations conferences in the field of statistics and indicators. The project on tools and indicators for gender impact analysis, monitoring and evaluation will be implemented over the next five years in order to provide reliable indicators at the 10-year benchmark of the adoption of the Platform for Action. The United Nations regional commissions will play a catalytic role in coordinating the various stakeholders, including users and producers of statistics. The task manager will develop a multi-year project proposal on data collection and use of gender indicators for policy-making, in liaison with the United Nations Statistics Division and other statistics offices of the United Nations, in order to take advantage of their work on indicators in the context of conference follow-up.

61. The Meeting took note of and endorsed the terms of reference of the task force on gender mainstreaming in the common country assessments (CCAs) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), prepared by UNIFEM as task manager. The Task Force was requested to collaborate closely with the Sub-Working Group on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee of humanitarian agencies, to facilitate an exchange of experience on gender mainstreaming. The Meeting agreed that the task force will focus on the 12 countries identified for roll-out of the UNDAF in 2001. The Meeting welcomed the initiative of the task force to develop a concept paper on women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming in the CCA/UNDAF process. The task force is encouraged to work with the

Turin College to use this concept paper as the basis of a module on gender mainstreaming with practical tools/guidelines to be included in the CCA/UNDAF syllabus at the Turin Training College. The Meeting supported the initiative of the task force to work with the United Nations Development Group Office (UNDGO) and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to compile and disaggregate a set of specific indicators under each development goal of the Millennium Targets, and to analyse this data from a gender perspective. This should be done in liaison with the task force on tools and indicators.

62. The Meeting welcomed the work already done by the task force on gender and financing for development, under the leadership of the International Labour Organization during an interim period, and entrusted it with the continuation of its efforts, in accordance with the endorsed terms of reference. The task force will work actively to ensure that a gender perspective is reflected in the documentation and discussions of the preparatory processes and in the International Conference on Financing for Development in 2002; to support coordination of the work of the United Nations system on gender and financing for development; to facilitate coordination and sharing of information between the United Nations system, other international and regional organizations, and NGOs and civil society groups and networks, particularly women's groups and networks, on gender and financing for development; and to organize a Day of Dialogue for government representatives and United Nations system and civil society stakeholders on gender and financing for development in the autumn of 2001.

63. The Meeting welcomed the work done by the task force on women, peace and security, under the task manager, Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues. The Meeting endorsed the terms of reference presented by the task manager. The task force will finalize and circulate the draft action plan on implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in the United Nations system; coordinate input to the Secretary-General's report requested under paragraph 16 of the resolution; and generate suggestions on how the United Nations system can remain actively seized of this matter. The Meeting noted the progress made in preparing the Secretary-General's report requested in Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and extended its full support to this effort. It endorsed the draft outline presented by the task force.

64. The Meeting agreed that the WomenWatch Committee would review further the recommendations made in the assessment report of the site. The review would focus in particular on the question of the site's dual function as portal and as online resource, and related resource implications; and on the question of broadening participation of stakeholders beyond the United Nations system, keeping in mind that United Nations-related information was the competitive advantage of the site and that various other sites already provided information on NGO activism.

65. The Meeting took note with appreciation of the completion of the work of the task managers on good practices and on gender training materials — UNDP and UNIFEM — the materials prepared, and the publicity given to the databases on a number of occasions, including at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. The Meeting endorsed the work already done by the task manager, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), on gender and ICTs and entrusted the task force to continue in accordance with the endorsed terms of reference. The task force will proceed with the creation of an inventory of gender-specific ICT projects of United Nations system entities and establish a central database within ITU. The task force will determine ways and means of, and coordinate a system-wide strategy for, ensuring that a gender perspective is included in the preparations for and outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society (2003).

66. The Meeting welcomed the finalized gender focal point study, presented by the task manager, UNFPA, which also included the recommendations the Meeting had adopted at its fifth session. The Meeting decided that an executive summary and the recommendations will be published in order to give visibility to the study, and requested the task manager to implement this decision.

67. The Meeting noted the ongoing reform of the ACC mechanisms. It decided to entrust its Chairperson, in (electronic) consultation with members, to prepare a proposal to the High-level Committee on programme and operations, on future arrangements for the United Nations system-wide collaborative work on gender equality. The proposal will assess the opportunities presented by the ACC reform to strengthen this work.

It will assess the activities of the Meeting in terms of working methods, outputs, clients and beneficiaries, and identify the unique contribution made by the Meeting so far to support implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and other gender-related global commitments. The Meeting's submission to the ACC will further include proposals on how the inter-agency collaborative work on critical issues for gender equality, such as in the areas of peace and security, ICT, CCA/UNDAF, programme budgets, among others, can continue in an efficient, flexible and effective manner in the future.

68. A one-day workshop on approaches and methodologies for gender mainstreaming was organized on 1 March 2001 in conjunction with the annual session of the Meeting to provide an opportunity for exchange of knowledge and experiences on approaches and methodologies for gender mainstreaming. The workshop was organized by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women in collaboration with other members of the inter-agency group. The case study presentations in the workshop covered incorporating gender perspectives into corporate medium-term planning processes (FAO); organizational arrangements to support gender mainstreaming (UNFPA); incorporating gender perspectives at the programme level (UNCHS); gender mainstreaming in intergovernmental processes (ESCAP); and methods and tools to support gender mainstreaming (Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women). The discussions revealed that considerable advances have been made within the United Nations system since the Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions in 1997 and that the inter-agency group itself is crucial for providing stimulus, support and learning opportunities to enhance the capacity of individual entities for gender mainstreaming. The discussions at the workshop indicated that, despite the wide variety of organizational structures, there are commonalities across the United Nations system which can be identified and addressed constructively in a collaborative manner. A number of important achievements, lessons learned, and good practice examples were identified and concrete recommendations made.

Notes

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[2] General Assembly resolutions S-23/2 and S-23/3.

[3] General Assembly resolution S-23/3.

[4] Previous activities of the Meeting have been reported in documents E/1999/54, E/CN.6/2000/2 and E/2000/77.